

**A REPORT**  
**ON**  
**SIMRAUNGADH – KATHMANDU – KODARI SILK ROAD CORRIDOR**  
**OF NEPAL**



**Submitted by:**

Arena Development Consult Pvt. Ltd.

Kathmandu, Nepal

**Submitted to:**

UNESCO, Kathmandu

2022 A.D.

## **TABLE OF CONTENT**

### Chapter One: Introduction

#### 1.1 Introduction

#### 1.2 Objective of the Study

#### 1.3 Significance of the Study

### Chapter Two: Kodari – Kathmandu – Simraungadh Silk Road Corridors

#### 2.1 Silk Road in Nepal

#### 2.2 Dimensions of the Kodari – Kathmandu – Simraungadh Silk Road Corridors

##### 2.2.1 Trade through Kodari-Kathmandu-Simraungadh Silk Road Corridor

##### 2.2.2 Religious Activities through Kodari – Kathmandu – Simraungadh Corridor

##### 2.2.3 Political Activities through Kodari – Kathmandu – Simraungadh Corridor

##### 2.2.4 Matrimonial Relation and Use of Kodari – Kathmandu – Simraungadh Corridor

##### 2.2.5 Academic Movement through Kodari – Kathmandu – Simraungadh Corridors

### Chapter Three: The Nodal Towns on the Simraungadh – Kathmandu – Kodari Silk Road Corridors

#### 3.1 Establishment of the Simraungadh- Kathmandu- Kodari Silk Road Corridor

### References

# **Simraungadh – Kathmandu – Kodari Silk Road Corridors**

## **A Preliminary Study**

### **Chapter One**

#### **Introduction**

##### **1. Introduction**

The Silk Road is an ancient road network which, using trade and religion as a means, caused the expansion of multi aspects of civilization in the region from Eastern Asia to Western Europe and the land in between. It is a network of trades, exchanges, relations and meetings of the East and the West. This road played an important role for the advancement of human civilization for two thousand years. The term 'Silk Road' has been established with its broad meaning as a medium of cultural exchange and development, however, the name 'Silk Road' was derived from the ancient trade route of high standard Chinese Silk that expanded from China to Europe.

Nepal does not seem to have been connected to the main stream of the Silk Road. However, Nepal had a relationship with India, China and Tibet since ancient times. These countries, using different roads, dealt with each other in terms of trade, religion and other issues in the ancient and medieval period. This indicates that the branches of the Silk Road were connected to Nepal through various routes. The Kaligandaki Corridor is one of the most important routes among them. The Mustang, an independent historical Kingdom from early 14<sup>th</sup> to the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century in the North and Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha in South, seems to have played a pioneer role in developing the Kaligandaki corridor as Silk Route in Nepal.

The study covers, with its major focus, the expanded geographical area of Lumbini – Lo Manthang corridor starting from upper Mustang to Lumbini-Kapilvastu capturing all the history of political and religious affairs that occurred in the area as well as the various cultural activities found along the corridor.

The main stream of the Silk Route is extended from Xian of China to Europe passing through various countries in Middle East. The road was not limited to trade but became greater means of religious and cultural exchange and expand. Therefore studies have been done in various dimensions of culture along the Silk Road. In the later period, especially from around the year of 2nd millennium, experts have expanded their study of exploring Silk Road also in East and South East of Asia. In this context Nepal also has been a place of focus.

Nepal is a multi-religious and multi-cultural country with a lot of natural and geographical variations. This specialty, the historical evidences have shown, has prompted since ancient time the frequent religious or trade movements to expand up to the remote corners of the country. Apart from internal exchanges or give and takes, Nepal had had relations with Tibet and China in the North and with India in the South since ancient times. Among the various dimensions of relations among these nations, the exchange of trade and religions is one of the most important dimensions. For the purpose of these trades and religious pilgrimages, some of the old routes were very important. Among them, the route which stretches along the Kaligandaki River, namely the Lumbini-Lo Manthang Corridor, is a very important one. So, this study focuses on how this road was connected with the Silk Road. The study focuses on the history and culture of different nodes/nodal towns established and developed along the routes and its probable connection to the Silk Road of main stream.

## **1.2 Objective of the Study**

The primary objective of this research is to do a preliminary study of the Simrongadh – Kathmandu – Kodari corridor to identify its possible link to the Silk Road. So the exertion aims to study the trans-border relation of Nepal with India and China in the political, religious and cultural context developed through this ancient route. Since it is a study of particular time period of history, it explores the religion, culture and trade history of Nepal linked with mentioned historical route from India to Tibet via Kathmandu valley. Numerous ancient settlements along the corridor and the available literatures particularly created in the same historical period are the main sources of this study. Therefore, some nodal towns developed within 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC to 16<sup>th</sup> Century AD will be identified during this study. Finally, through the analytical study of history and culture of Simrongadh – Kathmandu –

Kodari corridor, it has targeted to find out the position of Nepal, especially of mentioned corridor in connection with ancient Silk Road. Following are the objective set for the study

1. Explore and identify the component sites/monuments and nodes/nodal town/s within the Simrongadh - Kathmandu - Kodari corridor;
2. Prepare bibliography for further study of the Simrongadh - Kathmandu - Kodari corridor;
3. Prepare the Simrongadh - Kathmandu - Kodari corridor map indicating the connecting component sites/monuments and nodes/nodal town/s identified, with the related information.

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

This study completely deals with historical events occurred on the basis of Simrongadh - Kathmandu - Kodari corridor. The activities related to political, cultural, and religious and trade history will be explored being evidence based. Therefore, the study will shed light on the entire historical significance of Silk Road in Nepal developed through mentioned route.

## Chapter Two

### Kodari – Kathmandu – Simraungadh Silk Road Corridors

#### 2.1 Silk Road in Nepal

Nepal is not directly touched by the Silk Road but is connected to the Buddhist Route known as Uttarapath or Grand Trunk Road. This long route linking Peshawar and Patna is believed as a branch of Silk Road. In another way, from various passes through Northern border Nepal may have connection to the main stream of Silk Road. Nepal, in fact, is the bridge between the Grand Trunk Road in India and Silk Road of China. Nepal has already started a preliminary study on this field.

When the study of south Asian part of the Silk Road has been started, the fact has already come out that the Silk Road was branched off at Khasgar and extended to the South East towards India. The primary travelers of this branch route were Chinese travelers. Almost of those travelers seems to be Buddhist pilgrims. Definitely their keen objective of having this long travel was to visit Lumbini, the birth place Buddha also (Sukra Sagar Shrestha, 2072) Studies shows, among many Chinese travelers who tried to visit the pilgrimage sites related to Buddha, Fa-Xian and Hieun Tsiang are the most well-known ones who travelled in fourth and seventh century AD respectively. According to their travelogue both of them crossed the main Silk Road passing through Taklamakan and Gobi deserts in order to arrive in India. After India they came to Nepal.

Itsing is another traveler to come to Nepal from China. The frequent travel of Wang Huen, a political personality, to Nepal and various places of India is significant to study about the Silk Road in Nepal.

Bhrikuti is known as daughter of Nepal. She had got married with Tsrong Chong Gampo, King of Tibet. This King also had married a prince of China too. It shows the link between Nepal, Tibet and China. Araniko is another well-known historical personality to travel from Nepal to China Araniko, an architect of Nepal had been to China and spent his life there in China. It shows the continuity of come and go between China and Nepal up to 13<sup>th</sup> Century AD which was started in early historical period.

The travel made by Capuchin Fathers during 17<sup>th</sup> Century from India to China via Kathmandu of Nepal provides more evidences about frequent travel between India, Nepal and China.

## **2.2 Dimensions of the Kodari – Kathmandu – Simraungadh Silk Road Corridors**

All the above mentioned activities and findings hints that Nepal has some kind of link to Silk Road. Not one but various corridors seems linking China-Tibet-Nepal-India. The purpose of the travel is also seems different. Detail research and study about the history and historical events through those various corridors can establish the link to Silk Road. One of the major three Silk Road corridors of Nepal is Kodari-Kathmandu-Simrongadh corridor. The primary purpose of the travel through Kodari – Kathmandu – Simrongadh were, as historical evidences shows, trade, religious, political, relationship and academic types.

### **2.2.1 Trade through Kodari-Kathmandu-Simraungadh Silk Road Corridor**

As discussed in previous chapter the Kodari – Kathmandu – Simrongadh corridor linking Patna towards south and Lahsa and even Peking towards north has high potential to be established as one of the Silk Road corridors of Nepal. In different period of the history the route seems used for different purpose and the trade is one of those purposes of travelling through this route.

Trade from Kathmandu to Magadh was well established already before 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BC. Kautilya Arthasastra has mentioned very clearly that the special type of woolen blanket (Radi-pakhi) woven in Nepal was very famous in Magadh. In the same way a Jain text Vrihatkalpasutrabhasya also has described about the trade between Nepal and various places in the then India. The business relation established before the Christian era seems continued in Lichchhavi period too. The trade from Nepal to India, Nepal to Tibet and Tibet to India making Nepal as bridging point was continued In Lichchhavi period too. Tistung inscription and Bhatubahal inscription are about tax policy for the export and import trade goods (Dhanabajra Bajracharya, 2030: 310-314). Tistung also was one of the transit points of Simrongadh-Kathmandu corridor.

Tang Annals is a reliable historical source of Tibet. This document is important for the study of Nepali history as well. This historical document also mentions about establishing trade

route to connect Nepal and Tibet. The document says 'there are more business man than farmer'.

Some of the historical documents of Bangal also signifies about the business between Tibet-Nepal-Bangladesh. Bangal History mentions about the road from Tibet via Nepal to Bangal and trade of horses in big numbers. Therefore, Bangal used to be a big horse market for Tibetan and Nepal was transit point (Ramesh Dhungel, 2040). Hence through business China-Tibet-Nepal-and India were always in frequent touch to each other and the Kodari – Kathmandu – Simrongadh route was developed as Silk Road corridor.

The trade relation of Nepal with Tibet was continued up to Rana Period. That relation was highly valued up in the Period of Pratap Malla. Kaji Bhim Malla is credited for making a highly appreciated 'trade treated' with Tibet. The terms of that high valued treaty can be summarized as following:

- Kathmandu was granted joint authority with Tibet over the border towns of Kuti and Kerong.
- The Newari merchant community of Kathmandu valley was permitted to establish 32 trading houses at Lhasa.
- The Kathmandu court was given the right to post a representative (Nayo) at Lhasa.
- Tibet agreed not to impose any charges or customs duties on Newari merchants who were engaged in trade with Tibet.
- Tibet promised to make a token payment in gold and silver annually to Kathmandu.
- It was agreed that Nepal would mint coins for Tibet; Tibet would use these coins internally and would either provide the silver required for their minting or would pay for Nepali coins with gold.
- Tibet agreed that all trade with India, even though conducted by other than Newari merchants, would be channeled through Kathmandu valley in preference to the routes to the east.

It shows clear picture that merchants of Kathmandu valley had gained a kind of virtual monopoly with good control even over the Tibet's business to India. Kathmandu remain always the hub of the trade between Tibet and India.

### **2.2.2 Religious Activities through Kodari – Kathmandu – Simraungadh Corridor**

The religious activity occurred through this corridor was another cause to make the route vibrant always in the historical periods. In Lichchhavi period Buddhism was well flourished in Kathmandu. In the meantime Bhrikuti got married with Tson Chong Gonpo, King of



Tibet. When she went to Tibet from Kathmandu she had taken an image of Akshovya Buddha with her. It is said Bhrikuti played important role in flourishing Mahayan Buddhism in Tibet and China as well. In that period the route from Lhasa to Kathmandu must have developed.

Wang-Hiuen-tse was another person to use this corridor for religious purpose. Actually Wang-Hiuen-tse was a political person but some religious activities also are made his visit. Wang Hiuen-tse not only came to Kathmandu but also been to the palace of Harshavardan and one he visited to Lumbini too. Therefore the route Wang-Hiuen-tse covered is very long.

Dharmaswami is another significant religious person to travel. He was from China. He was a Buddhist Monk. Dharmaswami came to Nepal and went to Pataliputra (Patna) from Kathmandu. Historical documents say that the route used by Dharmaswami from Kathmandu to Patna was via Simrongadh. He was heartily welcomed by the King of Simrongadh. Dharmaswami's time is 12<sup>th</sup> century AD. The route established before the Christian era, continued in Lichchhavi period was even continued up to 12<sup>th</sup> century AD.

Kathmandu and Simrongadh seems always in touch in historical period. Along with various other the religious occurrences also are there to know the regular relation between Simrongadh and Kathmandu. Taleju of Kathmandu was originally from Simrongadh. Tulaja was tutelary deity of Karnat kings of Simrongadh. Devaldevi, the Queen of Simrongadh Kingdom brought it to Kathmandu and later became Taleju, a tutelary deity of Mallas.

Different Christian missionaries also used the route from Patna to Simrongadh and Kathmandu and from Kathmandu to Lhasa and Peking too. **Cabral** was the first Christian to arrive to Kathmandu proved by historical document. He travelled this route from Sigatse to Bangal via Kathmandu in 1626AD. Johann Grueber and Albert d'Orville's missionary arrived Nepal from Peking via Lhasa and went to Agra in 1662. This travel manifested that the route starting from Peking was continued up to Agra via Kathmandu. No doubt that this was the same route frequently used from ancient period. In the same way, as historical document says, one Armenian had arrived in Kathmandu in 1769. Santucci is another Christian Priest to

arrive Kathmandu. Santucci had come to Kathmandu from Patna. He stayed few months in Kathmandu and went back to Patna in 1780.

Above all religious activities through this route signifies that the Simrongadh – Kathmandu – Kodari route was one of the Silk Road corridors of Nepal.

### **2.2.3 Political Activities through Kodari – Kathmandu – Simraungadh Corridor**

There had had many political activities between Nepal – China – Tibet, Nepal – India and China-Tibet and India via Nepal in different historical periods. The route via Kodari – Kathmandu – Simrongadh to link China- Tibet and India was used for those political activities.

Nepal and Bhot (Tibet) had good political relation from the period of Sronchong Gampo (Songtsen Gampo). Taking the benefits of the same good political relationship with Tibet King Udaya Dev had got shelter in Tibet when chased by Guptas. Later, Narendra Dev, son of Uday Dev, got back his throne with the significant help of Tibet. The shortest and easy route for this come and go must be the same route from Kathmandu to Lhasa.

Li Pieao is another significant political personality from China to use this route. Li Pieao was an Ambassador. He had gone to Magadh via Kathmandu.

Wang-Hiuen-tse's travel through the route of Lhasa – Kodari – Kathmandu – Simrongadh to Magadh is one of the most significant activities to manifest the route as Silk Road corridor. Wang-Hiuen-tse's missions had taken place at least for three time. His mission had not stopped only in Kathmandu but had continued to the kingdom of Harsavardan. China had good relation with Magadh in the time of Harsavardan. But China had to fight with Magadh after the death of Harsavardan; China had taken help form Nepal in that fight with Magadh. Apart from various other things, the route from China to Magad via Kathmandu is significant in the context of Silk Road corridor.

An archival document of Tibet, known as Tunhuang Record is another important document to know about the political happenings between Tibet and Nepal. The Tunhuang Record says 'in the Monkey year, Tsanpo (King of Tibet) stayed in Bal-Po (Nepal) during summer. Some has interpreted it as Tibet's victory over Nepal at the time of Tsanpo; and other has

interpreted it as the good relation and frequent visit of the nation head to each other's countries. Whatever the interpretations are, it gives the clear hints that there used to be some routes for frequent visit to north to south and vice versa.

The politics of Simrongadh plays important role for the development of the corridors. In Simrongadh Nanyadev had established his Kingdom in early 11th century AD. Nanyadev himself was not local but had come there in Simrongadh from South India, Karnatak. It manifests that the movement between South India and Simrongadh was very frequent at that time. Simrongadh was powerful kingdom. From Simrongadh, Kathmandu was attacked at least five times. When the Kingdom of Simrongadh was collapsed by the attack of a troop of Delhi Sultan Gayasuddin Tuglaq the king Harisimha Dev with his family escaped from there and headed towards north and the King was died in Tinpatan of present Sindhuli district. Finally, the Queen and son continued further north and came to get refuge in her own maternal house. Later Queen Deval Devi had become very powerful in the politics of Kathmandu.

#### **2.2.4 Matrimonial Relation and Use of Kodari – Kathmandu – Simraungadh Corridor**

Since there was decent and respectful relation between Tibet and Nepal and Nepal and India in almost all historical periods, that relation even paved the way for matrimonial relation. There are some evidences of such relations form the very historical period. Bhrikut, a Lichchhavi Princes had married with Srongchong Gonpo, King of Tibet.

Lichchhavis of Kathmandu were from Baishali of ancient India. However it is yet obscured when the Lichchhavis left their original place Baishali and came to Kathmandu, but some inscriptional evidences hint that the relation of Lichchhavis to their place of origin and the other states around was always closed and decent. That good relation some time may have attracted each other even for the matrimonial relation. Inscriptional evidences says Bhog Varma, the then high political personality, had married the daughter of Magadh King Aditya Sen. Lichchhavi King Shiva Dev proudly says that he married the daughter of the same Bhog Varma and granddaughter of Aditya Sen of Magad. It shows the frequent movement between Kathmandu Magad. The easiest route to go Magad from Kathmandu is Simrongadh.

There was matrimonial relation between Karnat Dynasty of Simrongadh and Mallas of Kathmandu. King Harisimha Dev, the last king of Simrongadh had married with the sister of King Rudra Malla of Kathmandu.

In Malla period King Pratap Malla seems keeping marital relation both towards south and north. One of his Queens was from Southern Nepal and the next from Tibet. The Queen from Southern Nepal is even called "Mathali". It is said Tibetan Buddhist Guru Zil-gnon dbang-rgyal rdo-rje was always in Pratap Malla's Palace as an adviser. Pratap Malla had married a sister of the same Guru as his Queen.

### **2.2.5 Academic Movement through Kodari – Kathmandu – Simraungadh Corridors**

Along with trade, religion, politics and matrimonial causes the corridors through Kodari – Kathmandu – Simrongadh was used also for academic purpose. Influence of art and architecture, script, manuscript etc. are discussed as outcome of academic movements through this route in different historical period. Movement for learning and spreading religion is another dimension of academic activities. The corridors played important role in flourishing such academic activities in this extended territory. Some important happenings are discussed below.

Thonmi Sambhota is one of such personality who travelled this route in early historical period for academic exertion. His travel was not for anything else but for learning script practiced in Nepal and India. Writing was not developed and was not in practice in Tibet until 7<sup>th</sup> century. But the King was aware about the script and writing practice in Nepal and India. Especially for the flourishing Buddhism King felt the need of learning script. The King sent Thonmi Sambhota to India to learn it. It is believed that scholar Thonmi Sambhota had used the same route.

Araniko is another memorable historical figure in concern of Silk Road corridor. In 13<sup>th</sup> century AD Araniko, a renowned Nepali architect had been to China. Since the route Wang Huen Tse had travelled and was frequently used by various travelers after that was the shortest route to arrive Kathmandu from Xian and other different cities of China, probably

Araniko also should have travelled through the same route. The route seems to have been frequently used Government official until 1905 (DoA, 2068).

However the time period is of later, Kirkpatrick is another academic personality who had travelled from Patna to Kathmandu via Simrongadh. Kirkpatrick also had explored the ancient route from Patna to Lhasa via Simrongadh, Hetauda, Kathmandu, Nesti and Kodari. The route Kirkpatrick explored is almost similar route that was travelled by Capuchin Fathers during 17<sup>th</sup> century from Patna of India to Peking of China (Silva Levy).

Brian Hodgson is the next significant person who travelled this route for academic purpose. Hodgson had been to Simrongadh in 1853 AD. It clearly shows that the routes used from ancient and medieval period was continued until 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Hence the corridor from Patna (Ancient Pataliputra)-Vaisali-Simraungarh-Sindhuli Kathmandu-Nesti-Kodari-Xigatse-Lhasa-Tharchindo-Thindafu to Peking is an ancient Silk Road Corridor.

## Chapter Three

### The Nodal Towns on the Simraungadh – Kathmandu – Kodari Silk Road Corridors

#### Establishment of the Simraungadh- Kathmandu- Kodari Silk Road Corridor

The detail picture of the route from Kodari to Kathmandu and from Kathmandu to Simraungadh appears in the following way:

Kodari -Tatopani - Guyhe odar- Phungmachhe -patekuna- Duguna Gadi (Armasing Gaun) – Bagam-Gumbathang –Temathang – Buldi- Listi – Bakhang – Hindi Gaun (under Panch pokhari)- Jalbire – Irkhu – Melchaur - Laxman Danda – Chautara – Peepal Danda - Nawalpur – Melamchee –Kaule Dobhan – Sankhu, and from Sankhu–Telkot- Nagarkot- Dhulikhel- Dapcha- Nepalthok - Kusheshwor (**Dumja**) – **Khurkot- Nawalpur – Tilpung- Chakamake** Tinpatan- Majhuwa- Sakhamadi- Belghari- Tilange- Mujura Dovan- Ranichuri Hill (Rani Durbar)- Bhiman- Bardibas- Janakpur-Simraongadh.

One next corridor splits from Sindhuli Gadhi and rich to Simraungadh through Bagmati River corridor.

History shows Nepal and Pataliputra had business relation from the very early period. As mentioned above the Arthashastra of Kautilya says about the business relation between these two places. A special type of woolen blanket made in Nepal was famous in Pataliputra in the Time of Chandragupta Maurya. The shortest and easiest route from Kathmandu to Pataliputra (Patna) seems to be the route via Simraungadh.

In the Lichchhavi period relation movement between different places of present India and Nepal seems frequent. The use of the corridor for different purpose like trade, religion, politics, matrimonial, academic and various others are discussed above.

## **Nodal Towns along the Corridor**

In the study of Silk Road the concept of Nodal Towns or Nodes is very important. Tim Williams has defined the terminology Nodal Town as 'a major urban centre and usually a place where a number of routes intersect' is nodal point of Silk Road. These centres are likely to have played an important role in administration, re-supplying, redistribution/marketing, and production; and in reflecting the outcomes of the Silk Roads in terms of architecture, arts, society and beliefs (Tim Williams, 2014:27).

In the study of Kodari – Kathmandu – Simrongadh Silk Road Corridor this chapter focuses on the history and culture of different nodes/nodal towns established and developed along the corridor and its probable connection to the Silk Road of main stream.

### **Simrongadh Nodal**

Simraongarh located in the south part of Nepal is a popular historical and archaeological site. This place has been called by the name of 'salmalivanpataka' in Sanskrit language (Khanal, 2056). Simal, silk-cotton tree is called simar locally, so known as simroun or Simraongarh (Khanal, BS 2056:13). Probably Simraongarh was also known as simramapattana (Roerich, 1959: xiii). Satapatha Brahman has described about Mithila area and its oral traditions as well.

Ancient history of the area is very much interesting as well. The ancient town of Simraongarh was highly prosperous during the medieval period (11<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> century AD). Simraongarh, the ancient town is situated in the east-south of present Bara district. It is covered by Rautahad district in the east, Parsha in the west, Makwanpur and Sarlahi in the north and Champaran district of Indian in the south directions respectively. Bideha province Mithila is named by the name of Mithi. The 'bodiless Nimi' was called Bideha is said in puranas. Mithila has various names like Bideha, Janakpuri, Tirhut or Tirbhukti (Mishra, 2057:2-3).

The boundary of ancient Mithila state was Koshi in the east, Gandaki (Narayani) in the west, Himalaya (Mahabharat Ban) in the north and Ganga in the southern belts. Now, the fortified wall lies around 22 kilometers south-east from Kalaiya, the head quarter of Bara district inside the silk cotton tree on the shape of labyrinth. This fort area includes some huge villages like Kotawali, Laxmipur, Bhagawanpur, Dewapur, Hariharpur, karchowa, Amritjung and Golajung and some

other small villages as well. This fort links Shreenagar, Nayakatola, Khajani, Jhamari villages via Kotawali in the north and it touches the borderland of Nepal-India in the south.

Sirdhoj Janak was the founder of Mithila and Kritichhana, the 32<sup>nd</sup> King's representative of Janak, was the last king of Mithila. The king Kritichhana was killed in Mahabharat war .Then, this state was fused into Hastinapur. After that almost states of India were changed into republican states (Khanal, 2056:6-7). Vaishali was laid in the territory of ancient Mithila. But it is still unknown that how the boundary was divided between Vaishali and Bideha state.

Tirabhuktti was the name of ancient Videha areas that was differed by Sadaneera or Gandaki River with Koshal state. It was mentioned as a state till medieval period. Mithila was the capital of the Videha state till the mythological period. Tirhut state was a very popular for Hindu religion, philosophy and arts. Later on in historical period, Videha or Mithila state was popular by the name of Tirbhuktti or Tirhut and Simroangarh became the capital of Tirhut state from the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Ancient area of Mithila was the present capital of Simraonagad. Nanyadev was the founder of Simroangarh state. After Nanyadev, Gangadev, Narsimhadev, Ramsinghdev, Shaktisinghdev and Harisimhadev ruled in Simroangarh (Mishra, 2057:1).

Tibetan scholar named **Dharmasvamin (1197-1216) in 1236 has also** described about the state (Khanal, BS 2056:12). Dharmasvami was 29 years when he completed his studies in Tibet and decided to go to Nepala. He spent eight years at Svayambhu Chaitya and Dharmadhatu Vihara, situated on the border of Tibet and Nepala (Roerich, 1959: iv). Very likely he started on his journey in the spring of 1234 and spent about three months in travelling across Nepal to Tirhut. After finishing his education in Nepal, he decided to go to India in 1234 AD. Dharmaswami continued his studies at Nalanda till they were completed, probably by March 1236. He then begged permission of his Guru to return to Tibet (Roerich, 1959: v-vi). After crossing the Ganga probably in May 1236, he returned to Nepal across Tirhut and reached the city of 'Pa-ta' or Simraon, located in its extreme north. He had also got an opportunity to meet the local Raja, named Ramsimha, who honored him with a number of presents including gold, medicine, and rice and pressed him to stay for a few days (Roerich, 1959: vii-viii). His statement that pata/pattana (a capital in sanskrit), the capital of Tirhut, had six lakhs of families and was surrounded by seven walls and protected **by 21 depth moats**. There were one door in each



directions in east, west and south and two doors in north of the fort (Khanal, BS 2056:56). The height of these walls was about equal to that of a 'Tibetan fort'. Outside of the town walls stood the Raja's palace which had eleven large gates and was surrounded by twenty one ditches filled with water and rows of trees. There were three gates facing each direction, East, West and South and two gates facing North (Roerich, 1959: 58). Finally, Dharmasvamin reached his own monastery at ITe-u-ra in gNal (1241) most probably via Hetauda-Bhimphedi and Kathmandu to Tibet.

The Italian archaeologist team excavated in south-east corner of a mound of Ranibas Math digging trenches in 1991-1992 for stratigraphic study of cultural deposit of the site (Mishra, 2057:26-29). There are so many religious art and architectural remains, potteries, antiquities, fragmented inscription, Terracotta figurines, Bronze images, artistic stone architectural members, precious stone beads that are found in the area. The art or artifacts found in Simroangarh are affected by Maithil School of arts. The physical organs, facial expression and outlook of images that were made in Tirhut are comparatively different with Bangal and Vihar (khanal, BS 2057:43).

Simroangarh was the major route for coming and going to Nepal-India until the opening of rail way from Rakshyoul of India to Amalekhjung of Nepal. C. Karkapatric was also come through the same remains (Chandrakishwor, 2014:7). Hadson had visited to Simraongarh and wrote an article about the remains of the town (Chandrakishwor, 2014:7). Junga Bahadur Rana, the first Rana PM of Nepal, was died in Patharghatta, while he was returning after completing the hunting camp in winter in 1876.

### **Kepuchin Padari's Mission**

Padari Cabrel was the first European visitor to Kahmandu Valley, Nepal. He had returned to Bangal from Sigatse via Kathmandu in 1628AD (Dhakal, 2060:11). Later on Gruawar and Dorville had reached to Nepal while returning from Agara (Dhakal, 2060: 12). Padari Cyaseno had crossed the remains of Simroangarh in between 1739-1754 (Chandrakishwor, 2014:7). King Jagajaya Malla had charged entrance fee to those Kepuchin padaris who used to go to Nepal through Lhatse, a small trade center (Dhakal, 2060: 25). Kepuchin Padaris such as Jusheppe –

Da- Askoli and Franchhesko Mariya –Da- Tour had visited Nepal from Mithila of northern Bihar and Darvanga to Sindhuli Gadi crossing Kamala Valley. From there, they reached to Kathmandu crossing various huge hills via Sunkoshi Valley and Sankhu in 12 February 1707 (Dhakal, 2060: 45). They walked normal route as normal people do. Finally, they entered into Lhasa from Kathmandu via kuti and Gyantse in 12 June 1707 (Dhakal, 2060: 46). At that time, Lhasa was a richest trade city and it was opened to all India, China and Saiberia equally (Dhakal, 2060: 46).



Fig. 1: India-Nepal Border



Fig. 2: Kankalini Temple



Fig. 3: Stone statue found in Simraungadh

## TINPATAN

Nanyadev was the settler of South Karnataka country. He founded or established his capital in Simraungadh in 1097 defeating Northern Vihar (Gyawali, BS 2019:28-29). His representative named Harisimhadev was the last king of 'Simara Bangarh'. While Gaya-su-din-Tugalok was returning to Delhi defeating the revolution of Bangal with his a huge military team nearby Tirhut, Harisimhadev thought that the military team was going to attack him. He came out from the fortified wall (Garh) with his citizens to fight against the military team but Tirhute had not enough arm force to fight against them, so the arm force from the side of Harisimhadev entered into the Bandurga. Then the military force from the side of Gaya-su-din-Tugalok destroyed the Simroangarh.

After that Harisimhadev entered into the hill side of Nepal named 'Tinpatan', presently 'Chakamake Tinpatan' of Sindhuli district, from Simroangarh. Since 'Bhiman' is the place to climb upwards to Tinpatan, arriving present Bardibas or around seems necessary to reach to Bhiman. The best way to northward from Simrongadh is the Bagmati river corridor. From Bardibas the present highway is only the old route to arrive Bhiman. Bhiman is an old small settlement located in inner valley (Bhitri Madesh). The old route to climb upward to Tinpatan is still existed. The old route goes through Ranichuli hill (Rani Durbar) - Mujura Dovan - Tilange-Belghari – sakhmadi – Majhuwa and finally the Tinpatan. The king came and lived in the fort of Tinpatan of Sindhuli which was under his own kingdom. Most probably, Tinpatan was his own fort of hill for staying especially in the summer season (Nepal, B S 2054:164). Finally, Harisimhadev was died in Tinpatan in Magh 1382BS. Some other sources argue that Harisimhadev had arrived to Ashma Nagar (Panauti) leaving Simroangarh for the protection of himself as well as religion and came in Nepal as mentioned in a inscriptions of King Pratap Malla at Hanumandhoka (Gyawali, BS 2019:56-57).

Bhaktapur emerged as a center of 'political drama' with the arrival of the refugee party from Simaravangarh in winter 1326, led by widowed Queen Devaladevi and prince Jagatsimha Kuhmara, following the death of Harasimhadeva at Tinpatan (Vajracharya, BS 2066:x) in Sindhuli. The ancient route in between Tinpatan and Kathmandu seems to be Tilpung - Nawalpur – Gahate – Pokhare – Khurkot - Kusheshwor - Banepa to Kathmanu Valley. The other

route from Kusheswar is through Dhulikhela to Nagarkot and From Nagarkot to Sankhu or Nagrakot – Telkot – Changu- Bhaktapur and Kathmandu.

As historical evidences hint that the Bengal Sultan team had followed same route from Sindhuli to Nagarkot. From Nagarkot they climb down to Telkot and from Telkot to Changuarayan and from Changu to Bhaktapur and Kathmandu. It was the incident of 1349 November, as (Vajracharya, BS 2066: x).

### **Sindhuli Gadhi**

A significant historical site on the route from Simrongadh to Kathmandu is Sindhuli Gadi. Sindhuli gadi located on the top of Mahabharat hill of Shivalik range is a famous fort site. This was also the entry point to reach Tibet and China from southern Tarai. The route seems used in different historical periods for trade commercial, religious and political purpose from as far as Calcutta, Patna and further south. Both Sen Kings and kings of Kantipur seems tried several times to bring this hilly fort and the area around under their control. Historical record says Parthibendra Malla, the king of kantipur, had conquered this fort and taken it under control in 1681. Historical documents mention that he 'usurped Sindhuli fort, which was on the top of the hill, hard to climb, and importance of which had not been understood by former kings'. After it was again seized by Sen of Makwanpur.

Finally, however, the king of Gorkha prevailed the Sindhuli Gadhi. The Gorkhali troops captured it from Makawanpure Sen Army on September 21, 1762 (Basnyat, 2021:74). However, the armies of Makwanpur counter attacked and took the fort back under their control. Sindhuli was under Makwanur state. It was a big challenge for King Prithivi Narayan Shah. Then he led the battle on Saturday October 02, 1762 and finally took it under control (Basnyat, 2021:76).

In 1797, during the reign of king Rana Bahadur Shah, on his order, a pauwa, public resting house had been built on the hill of sindhuli (Basnyat, 2021:76). By the side of this pauwa a record has been found which says that a small fort had been constructed in 1804. This small fort later was rebuilt for the purpose of firing cannons. Sardar Rana Jung Baniya, Sardar Rewanta Kunwar, Umrao Dammara Thapa and others are found to have worked to build this small fort. There are other infrastructures by Sindhuli fort which are Small fort built in Jan 11, 1805, located around

300 meters west from the big fort, Barrack, Sidda Baba Mahadev temple, stone tub, Tudikhel, sano Tundikhel, Jail and other offices and sindhuli Gadhi palace .

In the year after 1744, there is no war had been fought from neither small nor big forts in Sindhuli Gadhi. During the war against Captain Kinloch's army in 1767 and Anglo-Nepal war 1814-1816, Nepalese troops had been stationed here but the war was not fought from here because the British troops did not reach up to here (Basnyat, 2021:76). Sindhuli fort is a heritage itself, besides that it has a great historical and administrative significance.



Fig. 4: Sindhuligadhi

### **Dumja - Kusheswar**

Kusheswar is another important place along the ancient route from Southern Tarai, Simrongadh to Kathmandu. Kusheshwor is a historical place located in Sindhuli district, in the border of two rivers; Sunkoshi and Roshi (Vajracharya, BS 2053:377). There is found an inscription by King Amshuverma during Lichhavi period. It is one of 64 linga shrines known as Adi Linga kusheshwor Mahadev. It is a historical, cultural, religious as well as archaeological significant site of Nepal. Queen Deval Devi along with her son Jagat Singh had also come through the same route, while Harisimha Dev had died in Tinpatan of Sindhuli in Magh 1382 BS while he was on

the way to Dolakha. Finally, they were allowed to enter into the palace of Rudra Malla named Uthunimam at Bhaktapur (Vajracharya, BS 2066:101).

### **Dhulikhel-Banepa**

Dhulikhel and Banepa are located in Kavrepalanchok district nearby Bhaktapur. Both of these places are ancient settlements situated out of Kathmandu Valley. Ananda Malla known as 'Nepaladhipati' built Tripura Rajakula (palace) and formed Bhaktapur as the capital of Kathmandu Valley and he also developed 'satgaun' (seven settlements) such as Sanga, Banepa, Panauti, Nala, Dhulikhel, Khadpu and Chaukot which were located around Bhaktapur (Vajracharya, BS 2066:53). Present name Dhulikhel is known as Dharikher locally. Dhulikhel is mentioned as Shikharapuri in historical inscriptions, palm leaf documents etc. Banepa is also known as Banepur and Bhonta state locally. It was on an ancient trade route in the past. People used to cross this route via Simroangarh- Bardibas -Ratupul- Bhiman - Ranichuli - Mujura Dobhan- Tilangee -Belghari- Sakhamadi - Majhuwa - Chakmakee Tinpatan - Tilpung - Nawalpur - Khuarkot- Kusheshwor-Nepalthok- Dhulikhel –Nagarkot-Telkot and Sankhu and finally reached in Kathmandu. People used to go Khasa and returned the same way by foot for trade or business purpose.

### **Sankhu**

Sankhu, an old historical town, with more than thousand years old, is located about 17 km north-east of the Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. It is a historical, cultural, religious as well as archaeological significant place of Kathmandu. The Vajrayogini Temple Complex and the early settlement of Sankhu are historically and culturally very important, so it has been nominated in UNESCO World Heritage tentative list in 2008. The fortified wall of Sankhu was surrounded by ditches around of which remains can be found even now. According to the Buddhist text, Manisaila Mahavadana, Jogadev founded the town followed by the order of the goddess Vajrayogini, and Sankaradev was noted as the first king of the town (Sharma & Shrestha, 2016,

p.5). Regarding this, the Chronicle DevamalaVamsavali has described that Sankhu was formulated in the shape of a conch shell by Sankardev in Kaligat Sambat 3925 (825 AD) and it was offered to the goddess Vajrayogini. The town is still surrounded by defense wall as gates. It was a popular trade route from Kathmandu via Sankhu to Lhasa or Tibet during medieval period.

## **Chautara**

Chautara is head-quarter of Sindhupalchok district in Bagmati zone which is located in the northern part of Nepal and covers an area of around 50 square kilometers. Now, it lies in Chautara sangachowkgadi municipality. The average elevation is 1,600 metres above sea level. The largest ethnic groups are Sherpa, Newar, Brahmin, Chhetri, Gurung, Magars, Tamang, etc. The major languages are Newar, Tamang, Nepali, Nepal Bhasa and English is understood by majority of people. The major religions are Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity. Chautara was an ancient settlement which was the center of administration as well as trade. From Chautara, people used to go Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal and returned the same way via Peepal Danda-Nawalpur – Melamchee –Kaule Dobhan – Sankhu.



Fig. 5: Chautara Sindhupalchok

## **Duguna Gadhi (FORT)**

Duguna fort lies to the north of Sindhupalchok district, nearby Tatopani of Nepal as well as Khasha of China. The present fort of Duguna was built under the directive of Prime Minister Janga Bahadur Rana (Basnyat, 2021: 84). Listikot served as the gateway to Khasa and Kuti of Tibet and immigration and customs posts were placed in Listikot. But for the purpose of war against Tibet, Listikot simply did not help because one could not watch and monitor the activities in Tibet from this place directly. And also the cannons could not be fired with greater force from here. Therefore, Duguna Gadi (fort) had to be built.

Nepal fought three wars against Tibet and one with China and Tibet. During those periods, Listikot was the place to induction of troops and store logistics. When in 1854, Junga Bahadur Rana led the last war against Tibet and won the war, he directed that a fort be built, one in Duguna and the other at northern border in Rasuwa (Basnyat, 2021 : 84) thus that these forts could be used in case of war against Tibet in the future.

Sher Regiment, Kali Prasad Regiment and Gorakhnath Regiment of Nepalese Army had completed the fort in December 14, 1855 (Basnyat, 2021: 84). Duguna Gadi was later used as immigration and customs point. After that there has not been any war from this fort. There is a small fort to the west of the premises for cannon firing and a large fort lies 200 meters east-north for infantry and for cannon as well.

For the purpose of mobility of people, still there can be seen a huge communication wall with firing bays between cannon fort and big fort. One could fire rifle from here easily. Due to the devastating earthquake of 2015, except for the inner parts of bigger fort, all other parts of Duguna big as well as small fort have been destroyed.

From Duguna Gadi (Armasing Gaun) to Chautara the following is the route: Bagam-Gumbathang –Temathang – Buldi- Listi – Bakhang – Hindi Gaun (under Panch pokhari)- Jalbire – Irkhu – **Melchaur** - Laxman Danda – Chautara.





Fig. 6: Dugunagadhi Sindhupalchok



Fig. 7: Side view from Dugunagadhi

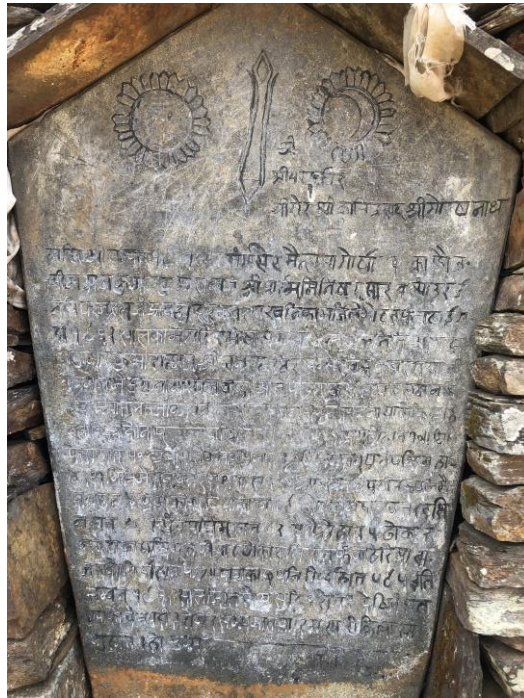


Fig. 8: Stone scripture found near to Dugunagadhi

### **Liplang To Patekuna**

Liping is a boarder land between Nepal and China located on the bank of Bhotekoshi which comes from northern belt of Nepal from Bhot. Khasa bazaar of China and Liping of Nepal are two significant trade centers which are separated by Bhotekoshi River in the mid-point.

Tatopani, Chauki Danda (kodari), Bhise and Liping are the ancient trade routes of Nepal to Khasa Bazar of China. Guyhe Odar (cave structure) links the way to Tatopani and Phungmachhe as well as Patekuna. According to local Bire Tamang (57 years) and based on field observation, Tatopani is entered from northern corner of hill of Patekuna via Phungmachhe and Guiye Odar. Guiye Odar is the central point of the route where traders used to stay at night and moved to their destinations in the morning. It is said that a very important night holding center on the route for business man and porters used to be the very Guiye Odar. There are two local saying after the naming of Guiye Odar. Once a very hungry porter arrived eagerly to get some food from other porters resting in Guiye Odar. Unfortunately he met no one there; but fortunately he got leftover of some dried 'Dhindo' and ate it hastily. Afterward he came to know that it was not dried Dhindo but human excreta. When the local people knew that dirty incident, afterward people start calling the cave as Guiye Order. According to other local saying, because of busy staying of porter the cave halting place and around was very dirty with human excreta, and for that local people named it Guiye Odar.

Due to the modern road construction the Odar (Cave/rock shelter) has been buried completely and there is no more existence of Guiye Odar now.



Fig. 9: Silk Road from Simraungadh to Kodari

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Bajracharya, D.B. (BS 2053). Lichhavikalka Abhilekh (Inscriptions of Lichhavi period), Second edition, Nepal & Asian Research centre
- Bajracharya, D.B. (BS 2064). Gopalrajvamshavaliko Aitihashik Bibechana (Historical Interpretation of Gopalrajvamshavali). Nepal & Asian Research centre, p. 101
- Basnyat, P. S. (2021AD). Military History and Heritage of Nepal, Rajendra Chhetri
- Chandrakishwor, **Simroangarkha Sanket** (Sign of Simroangarkh). Kantipur Daily, 16 October 2014 Thursday, p. 7
- Dhakal, S. (Trans.) (BS 2060). Tibet Ra Nepalma Itelian Dharmapracharakharu, Nepal Rajakiya Pragma Pratisthan.
- Gyawali, S.B. (BS 2019). Nepal Upatyakako Madhyakalin Itihas (The Medieval History of Nepal Valley). Kathmandu: Royal Nepal Academy.
- Khanal, M. P. (BS 2056). Simronagadko Itihash (History of Simraunagad). Kirtipur: Nepal & Asian Research Center
- Mishra, T.N. (BS 2057). Bideha-Mithila Desh Ra Yesko Madhyakalin Rajdhani Simroangarkho Itihas (Bideha-Mithila Country and History of the Medieval Capital), Simroangarkh), Simraungadh Bisayak Sangosthi, Kathmandu: Nepal Royal Pragma Pratisthan.
- Nepal. G. M. (BS 2054). Nepalko Purbamadhyakalko Itihash (Early Medieval History of Nepal). Kirtipur : Nepal and Asian Research centre
- Rakesh, R. D. (editor) (BS 2057). Simraungadh Bisayak Sangosthi, Kathmandu: Nepal Royal Pragma Pratisthan.

Roerich, G. (translated.) (1959). **Biography of Dharmasvamin**. Patna: K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute.

Sharma, D. R. & Shrestha, T. B. (2016). SANKHU: Historical and Cultural Heritage, Kirtipur: Nepal & Asian Research center.